

# Pre-K Teaching Times

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## WELCOME BACK

Welcome back to school! Can you believe another school year is here already with new families, new children, new faces, new smiles, and new challenges?

The first few weeks of school are never boring. We know you are busy – learning about your children, creating engaging activities, and helping families settle into a new school year. Exciting things are happening in your classroom.

Bright from the Start welcomes all NEW lead and assistant Pre-K

teachers. We hope your first year in Georgia's Pre-K Program is rewarding. Thank you for helping provide a quality learning environment and sound, developmentally appropriate instructional practices for Georgia's Pre-K children.

We also welcome back our RETURNING lead and assistant Pre-K teachers. Thank you for continuing to work in Pre-K classrooms and for helping to build a strong academic foundation for our four-year-old children. We know that you will be as excit-

ed as we are about the direction in which Georgia's Pre-K is moving.

Bright from the Start develops this monthly newsletter as a resource for Georgia's Pre-K teachers. Visit our website regularly during the school year to access this document (at [www.decal.ga.gov](http://www.decal.ga.gov) under Pre-K, then Newsletters). Newsletters from previous years, containing a wealth of information and ideas, are also posted.

## Starting the Year Off Right

Successful teachers are expert planners. They plan what they're going to teach; how they're going to complete assessment; field trips; what they'll do when someone has a potty accident on the field trip; and the list goes on. A few things that we all know about planning

are so universal they could almost be called early childhood laws.

For example:

- *Have everything prepared the day before the first child walks in the door.*
- *Make sure there is very little wait time in*

*the classroom.*

- *Break children into small groups whenever possible.*
- *Make sure a teacher is sitting beside the student who likes to poke during circle time.*



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

If you have questions, call the Pre-K consultant on duty at 404-656-5957.

Pre-K consultant contact information also can be found at [www.decal.ga.gov](http://www.decal.ga.gov)

## Starting the Year Off Right *(continued)*

- *Plan for transitions – especially in the beginning of the year.*

Effective planning directly affects effective classroom management. Pre-K teachers know how to use assessment data to plan instruction. You also know how to collect and use classroom data to develop a classroom management plan. Collect data such as how long your students function well in circle time; what types of small group activities keep most students engaged; which transitions are the most challenging. Use the information you collect to make management plans. If the students function well at circle time for eight minutes at the beginning of the year, plan circle time for eight minutes for the first several weeks. By the middle of October, they may be ready for ten minutes of circle time. If the class loves small group experiments, but cooking projects are a disaster, plan more experiments. If the transition from center time to outside is hectic, have one teacher take the children who have finished and cleaned their centers outside first, and let the other teacher bring the students who move more slowly when they're finished. Identify what works well and what doesn't work well and

plan accordingly. This type of planning should also take place for individual children.

Teachers and students can develop many types of plans: center plans, friend plans, lunch plans, rest plans, group plans, leaving mommy plans, etc. The important thing is that it is unlikely that a student will change a repeated behavior unless the teacher changes something about his/her routine. Children are most likely to behave well for teachers who truly care for them.

Children will experience an adjustment period in the first couple of months of Pre-K. During this period some children may be quiet and reserved and others may scream, cry, bite, hit other children and throw tantrums. If you experience any problem behaviors in the first month or so of school, work with the families and children to ease the transition for them. Perhaps they can bring a special toy/blanket/stuffed animal from home to use during difficult times. Or, perhaps a certain child or teacher in the classroom makes a troubled child feel more comfortable. If so, pair them up during the anticipated difficult times. Most children should transition to the new environment within a month or two of school

starting.

If you continue to have difficulties with a particular child after this adjustment period, you may need to contact outside support to help you. We recommend that you talk with your project director or principal and the child's family about any issues the child has. Be sure to document when problems arise, using a behavior documentation form located on our website. You may also need to schedule a conference to determine what else the teacher and family can do to support this child.

If the problems continue, refer to section 3.9 in the Pre-K Program Operating Guidelines for further guidance.

## Lesson Plans

You should continue to use one of the lesson plan templates found on our website. The templates can be manipulated so you can reorder your day, but no other additions or changes should be made. Each template contains space for lesson planning, small group planning, supplemental planning, changes to the learning environment, and requirements and space for assessment planning.

Also posted are examples of lesson plans posted to assist teachers.

The lesson plans provide an easy-to-manipulate template that will support you in documenting the required instructional activities and that have been correlated to the required Instructional Quality Guide for Instructional Planning mentioned above.

Back again this year are the beginning of the year lesson plans along with a handbook to use with them. These are useful for guiding instruction during the first 12 weeks of school for new and returning teachers.

You can access all lesson plans and resources by visiting [www.decal.ga.gov](http://www.decal.ga.gov); click on Pre-K; then on Teachers; and then on Planning.

## The Who, What, When, and Where of Content Standards

**Who** should be using content standards? **All** Pre-K teachers should use Georgia's Pre-K Content standards in weekly lesson plans to document what is being taught in each planned instructional activity. All seven domains (Mathematics, Language and Literacy, Science, Social Studies, Physical Development, Social and Emotional Development, and Creative Expression) should be taught sometime each week.

**What** are content standards? Georgia's Pre-K Content Standards provide the foundation for instruction in all of our Pre-K classrooms. Georgia's Pre-K standards reflect current educational research and are aligned with the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards for grades K-12. Using the correlations, you can easily see how what is taught in Pre-K sets the stage for expectations in Kindergarten. Some Pre-K standards actually match sever-

al Kindergarten standards; however, there is not always a corresponding Kindergarten standard for every Pre-K content standard. Remember, especially when looking at the standards in September, that they reflect what children should know at the **end** of Pre-K – not at the **beginning**.

**When** should content standards be used? Content standards should be documented every day for all planned instructional activities and should include the complete code. Ex: LD2a, SS1a

**Where** can I find them? The content standards are posted on the Bright from the Start website at [www.decal.ga.gov](http://www.decal.ga.gov). Click on "For Teachers" where you will find a direct link to the standards.

## CLASS

Georgia's Pre-K Program continues to use the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) as an observational tool that focuses on the effectiveness of classroom interactions among teachers and children. Children thrive when teachers create nurturing, well managed settings and provide frequent and engaging learning opportunities. These daily interactions promote children's social and cognitive development.

The CLASS is divided into three domains: Emotional

Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. Under each domain are ten dimensions.

During the 2010-2011 school year, Pre-K consultants collected baseline data by conducting CLASS observations in all Pre-K classrooms. This baseline was used to identify strengths and weaknesses across the state. The scores were not, nor will they be, used to evaluate individual teachers.

Pre-K consultants will continue to complete CLASS

visits randomly in about 30% of the Pre-K classrooms. They will include new and returning Pre-K teachers.

Additional information about the CLASS dimensions will be focused on in the monthly newsletters. Georgia State University will feature an online module directly related to the CLASS.

To learn more about CLASS, visit our website or [www.class.teachstone.org](http://www.class.teachstone.org)

## WSO

Eighty-one percent (81%) of Georgia's Pre-K programs will participate in Work Sampling Online this school year. In the 2013-2014 school year, 100% of our Pre-K programs will use Work Sampling Online. The additional classes that have been added this year will bring the total number of statewide WSO classes to 3,141. Following are the training requirements for teachers utilizing WSO: teachers new to WSO will attend a one-day, face to face WSO training; returning WSO teachers will participate in an online WSO refresher course. Visit the Bright from the Start website under the Pre-K tab for WSO resources to help you in your assessment needs. If you have additional questions, e-mail your Pre-K consultant or Pre-K Assessment at [prek-assessment@dec.al.ga.gov](mailto:prek-assessment@dec.al.ga.gov)

## TEACHER HIGHLIGHT

Mary Reid, a Pre-K teacher with Carroll County Schools, has in recent years been emphasizing writing with her four year olds at Glanton Hindsman Elementary. Her children learn early on that they are writers and they enthusiastically participate in writing individual and class stories.

Her work with children over the years demonstrates the power of shared writing...a tool that should be utilized daily by Pre-K teachers everywhere. Now, Mary has been honored to have an article featuring the techniques she has used in her Georgia Pre-K classroom published in a national publication from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), *Teaching Young Children*.

## Your Pre-K Consultant

Consider your Pre-K consultant as a resource to help teachers be successful. We can assist your program in the following areas:

Offer technical assistance to help programs meet Georgia's Pre-K Program Guidelines

Help in setting up the learning environment

Help with developing a daily schedule

Help with understanding lesson planning and assessment

Offer support with classroom management

Provide professional development and training

Pre-K consultant contact information can be found at

[www.decal.ga.gov](http://www.decal.ga.gov)